



# **Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program**

## **Policy Manual – Chapter 2 Authorizations**

November 2015

Division of Early Care and Education

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## **2.1 Wisconsin Shares Child Care Providers**

Wisconsin Shares authorization and reimbursement policies are subject to Wisconsin's approved [Child Care Development Fund \(CCDF\) plan](#), current state and federal law, administrative rules, and departmental policies.

### **2.1.1 Fingerprint-Based Background Checks**

All child care providers must complete a one-time fingerprint-based background check in order to be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy payments. The one-time fingerprint-based background check is required for:

- Applicants for certification or licensure
- Currently certified operators and licensees
- Adult caregivers including employees, assistants and volunteers that are counted in the staff to child ratio
- Adult non-client residents and household members
- Students at least 18 years old and whose placement is more than 60 days
- Extended stay visitors at least 18 years old who live on the premises more than 60 days
- Adults employed or contracted in a caregiver role in the certified program including any volunteers who provide care and supervision of children on behalf of the operator

### **2.1.2 Child Care Provider Regulation**

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program reimburses regulated child care providers. To be eligible for reimbursement, Child care providers must be:

- Licensed or
- Certified or
- Operated by a Wisconsin public school board

#### **2.1.2.1 Licensed Child Care Providers**

Licensing rules create separate requirements for three (3) categories of licensed child care:

- Group Child Care Centers
- Family Child Care Centers

- Day Camps

Child care licensing is done by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) through its regional licensing offices. Once the provider's regulation has been approved, the information is entered into the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System, called WISCCRS, and automatically pulled into CSAW.

#### **2.1.2.2 Certified Child Care Providers**

There are two (2) levels of certification for family child care providers who meet the requirements:

- Regular Certified
- Provisionally Certified

Local administrative agencies are responsible for certifying child care providers. Once the provider's regulation has been approved, the information is entered into the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System, called WISCCRS, and populated in CSAW.

##### **2.1.2.2.1 In-Home Certified Child Care Providers**

An in-home child care provider may be either provisionally certified or regularly certified and travel to the child's home to provide care. In-home child care providers may care for more than three children living in the home under the age of seven because a license is not required for caring for children in their own home. See 2.2.12 for requirements for In-Home Certified Child Care Providers. Once the provider's regulation has been approved, the information is entered into the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System, called WISCCRS, and populated in CSAW.

##### **2.1.2.3 Public School Programs**

Child care programs that are operated by public school boards must be recorded in CSAW by local agency staff. Public school programs are paid at the licensed group rate and they must submit rates to the local agency to enter into CSAW.

Local workers must:

- Collect W-9 form <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/doc/149e.doc>
- Collect the child care provider's private pay prices and enter those rates into CSAW
- Verify that the W-9 form lists the school district as the business name

Child care programs that are provided in school buildings for only school-age children follow licensing regulations, but are monitored by the school board instead of the State of Wisconsin.

There are some child care programs that are located on public school grounds, but are operated by non-profits or other organizations that are not the school boards. These programs do not qualify as child care providers under the public school program category, so must be regulated in another way. The local agency staff must verify that the W-9 form lists the school district as the business name. If not, this provider is not eligible under the Public School Program category.

**Note:** Parochial or tribal K-12 schools must be either licensed (if caring for children under age 7) or certified as a school-age program (if only caring for children over the age of 7) in order to be eligible for reimbursement under the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program.

#### **2.1.2.4 Exceptions to Regulations**

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program will reimburse unregulated providers during [short term child care arrangements](#) such as when a child is ill, or when the child care provider has an emergency due to illness or other circumstance, and the child is not able to attend the authorized child care provider. These unregulated child care providers are exempt from participation in the YoungStar Quality Rating and Improvement System. Authorizations to unregulated child care providers are:

- Limited to two (2) weeks
- Limited to child care providers that are at least 18 years old
- Reimbursed at the provisionally certified rate
- Created in CSAW, after a provider record has been created for the temporary provider by the local agency

#### **2.1.2.5 Child Care Provider Regulation Outside of the State**

Parents may select a child care provider that is located outside of Wisconsin. Child care providers that are located outside Wisconsin must be regulated in their own state and must submit documentation to the local agency of the home state's regulatory approval.

When a parent indicates that they have selected a child care provider that is out-of-state, the local agency worker must collect both a completed W-9 form and a Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract from the provider, and create a record for the child care provider in CSAW. If the provider is licensed, the local agency worker must also collect the provider's rates. There are differences between child care regulations from state-to-state; the local agency worker must choose the regulatory type that most closely matches Wisconsin regulations and create a record in CSAW for the provider. The rate calculation will be based on the county maximum rate in the parent's county of residence or the child care provider's price, whichever is lower.

The weekly reimbursement ceiling is increased by 10% for accredited out-of-state providers if the accreditation is accepted by YoungStar.

### **2.1.3 Tax Reporting**

All child care providers that receive reimbursement for child care under the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program must provide a valid Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), also known as a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or Social Security Number (SSN) to the child care authorization worker, certification worker or the DCF licensor. Local agency child care authorization workers must collect this information from Wisconsin Public Schools, child care providers that are located outside of Wisconsin, and unregulated child care providers. Certification workers must collect this information from certified child care providers. State licensing staff collects this information from licensed child care providers. DCF will send an IRS Form 1099-MISC on or before January 31 of each year to all child care providers that receive more than \$600 in Wisconsin Shares reimbursements in a tax year.

If any of the information on the W-9 tax form changes, the child care provider must submit the new information to the local agency or the regulatory agency. This information must be recorded in the automated systems before an authorization can be written.



### **2.1.4 Child Care Providers who are Legally Responsible for a Child in Care**

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program will not reimburse a provider for child care services when the provider is the parent of the child or resides with the child unless a waiver has been applied for and has been granted, per DCF 201.04(2j). This includes any placement arrangements that the provider may have with any children. See Chapter 4 for additional information on this waiver.

## **2.2 Wisconsin Shares Authorizations**

Child care authorizations are written approval for child care provider reimbursement. Authorizations must always begin on a Sunday and must always end on a Saturday.

### **2.2.1 Parental Choice**

Parents have the right and responsibility to choose a regulated child care provider for their child within limits set by Wisconsin Statute 49.155(4)(a).

### **2.2.2 Authorization Assessment**

Authorization workers are responsible for evaluating the needs for child care for all family or case types. Child care authorizations must be based on an assessment of:

- The number of hours of care each child in the family needs per week to enable the parent(s) to participate in the approved activities, including lunch and break times, and travel time between the work-activity and the child care location
- Overlapping schedules of two parent families
- The appropriate type of authorization (attendance-based or enrollment-based)
- The length of time child care is needed (up to six months)
- The copayment type
- The child's school schedule
- Shared placement schedules
- Any other factors that impact the need for child care

The following sections provide clarification of the assessment requirements.

**Note:** Children of parents who are employed by certified child care providers are not eligible for an authorization at the child care provider where their parent is employed.

**Note:** W-2 FEPS do not determine the child care needs for W-2 families, however a W-2 placement is an approved activity and the authorization worker must consider the activities assigned in the W-2 Employability Plan in assessing child care needs.

### **2.2.3 Two-Day Time Frame to Issue Authorization**

The local agency must issue the child care authorization within two days of eligibility confirmation in CWW when the parent has provided the agency with the child care provider information. Any delay in this time frame must be supported by a CWW case comment indicating the reason for the delay.

#### **2.2.3.1 Backdating Authorizations**

At initial eligibility, an authorization may be backdated to the Sunday of the week the current eligibility period begins as long as the child care provider was regulated during that time, has submitted the YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract, and has provided care for the child. The authorization may only be backdated to the contract begin date or the provider regulation date, whichever is later.

If a family that has been determined eligible for child care assistance does not request an authorization for child care reimbursement until several months after initial eligibility has been determined, the authorization may be backdated to only the first of the month of the request for authorization.

**Example:** On 7/9/15 Kallie is found eligible for child care with an effective date of 7/1/15. She contacts the authorizing child care worker on 7/13/15 and requests an authorization for child care. The authorization can be backdated to Sunday, 6/28/15, the Sunday prior to the 1st of July.

#### **2.2.3.2 Backdating Authorizations for Ongoing Eligibility**

Late requests for child care authorizations should be honored if all work criteria are met and eligible care has been provided. CSAW allows backdating authorizations and attendance up to three months in the past. If an agency needs to back date an

authorization for a time period that is greater than three months in the past, a worker with 'retro' security access must enter those authorizations into CSAW.

#### **2.2.3.3 Backdating Authorizations due to Late SMRF**

When a parent submits a completed Six Month Report Form (SMRF) in the month after it is due, the case can be reopened in CWW without re-applying for child care assistance. If the parent has continued to be in an approved activity since the SMRF due date, an authorization should be backdated to avoid a break in the child care authorization.

#### **2.2.4 Two-Parent Families and Three-Generation Families**

A child care agency must only authorize child care in two-parent families and three-generation families for the period of time during the overlap of approved activities of both/all parents.

**Example 1:** Alberto and Alana both work full time. Alberto works from 3:30 p.m. to midnight and Alana works 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The child care authorization is limited to the overlap in work and travel time for both parents. Alberto is available to care for their one-year old until he drops the child off with the provider at 3:00 p.m. and leaves for work. It takes Alana 30 minutes to get to the child care center after work. The authorization may cover 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., or 2 hours per day.

**Example 2:** Melissa is 17 years old. She and her baby live with the teen's parents. This is a three-generation family. The authorization worker must consider the approved activity schedule of the teen parent and both of the grandparents when determining the number of authorized hours.

In two-parent and multi-generation family situations where one parent is unable to work and unable to care for the children as documented by a physician, child care may be authorized for the time period that the first parent is participating in his or her approved activity.

### 2.2.5 Travel Time

The authorization worker must evaluate the need for travel time to allow the parent(s) time to travel from the child care location to his or her approved activity and from his or her activity back to the child care provider location. The authorization worker must assess the actual travel needs and ensure that adequate travel time is included in the number of authorized hours. The authorization worker may verify the parent's travel time request via an Internet map search or a bus schedule. The authorization worker must always document the need for travel time or the lack of need for travel time in CWW case comments **or by documentation in ECF.**

### 2.2.6 Varying Schedules

When a parent's work or school schedule varies from day-to-day or week-to-week, the authorized hours must include the maximum number of hours that may be needed in any given week. When the parent's need for child care varies from week-to-week, it is acceptable to use an attendance-based authorization when authorizing to a licensed group child care provider. See section 2.2.9.1 for more information on attendance-based authorizations.

**Example:** Janice works part-time and is completing a one-year certificate program at the technical college. Janice's class schedule varies such that she is in class 15 hours one week and 8 hours on opposite weeks. Janice's work schedule also varies; some weeks she is scheduled to work 5 hours and other weeks she is scheduled to work 15 hours. The most child care that Janice will need for work and school in one week is 30 hours, which will occur on the weeks that she is in class 15 hours and working 15 hours. The authorization should be written for 30 hours plus appropriate travel time between work, school, and the child care program.

**Child care authorizations for parents who work an on-call work schedule must be attendance-based. These authorizations must be limited to the actual work time plus travel as needed and must not include time while the parent is waiting to be called for employment. For new on-call employment the authorization must be written to cover expected work hours based on documentation from the employer. For on-call employment that is ongoing, the authorization must be written based on the average number of hours worked in previous months as documented by pay stubs or other employment verification. Parents must contact the local**

agency to report any changes in the on-call employment schedule within 10 days of the change as with all other changes. Authorization workers must enter case comments in CWW describing how the authorized hours were determined based on the parent's work schedule. The Child Care Worksheet or other items must be scanned into ECF.

### **2.2.7 Sleep Shift Child Care**

Child care may be authorized to allow sleep time for a parent who works third shift. The hours authorized for sleep time should be based on the parent's need to sleep during daytime hours in order to remain employed. The local agency can negotiate with the parent for the amount of sleep time authorized per week. The same family may also request child care for the hours of employment. The total number of hours of both authorizations combined cannot exceed 75 hours per week. The worker must create a second authorization if the weekly number of hours exceeds 50. The first authorization will be for 50 hours and the second authorization will be for the remaining hours (up to 25 hours). The worker must document the justification for the authorized sleep time in CWW case comments.

### **2.2.8 Authorizations for Self-Employment**

During the first six months that a parent is engaged in starting up a new business, the agency may authorize child care for the hours the parent is engaged in self-employment work, up to one full-time authorization. A parent may be eligible for a full time authorization because of a new instance of self-employment only once every 24 months. Any part of the six-month period for a new self-employment business counts and child care may not be authorized under this section again until 24 months have elapsed.

**Example:** Tamika begins a new business baking cakes. For the first six (6) months of her new business, she is not required to demonstrate a profit and the child care authorization may be for the number of hours she reports working, up to full time. After the first six (6) months, Tamika's child care authorization will be based on her monthly earnings divided by minimum wage.

**Note:** Self-employment as an unregulated child care provider is not allowed as an approved activity for Wisconsin Shares child care assistance eligibility.

### 2.2.8.1 Ongoing Self-Employment

After the first six (6) months of a new business being in operation, child care authorizations for self-employment are limited to the number of hours that support employment that produces monthly-adjusted self-employment income equivalent to at least the state minimum wage.

### 2.2.8.2 Calculating Ongoing Self-Employment Authorizations

The monthly adjusted self-employment income divided by the Wisconsin minimum wage equals the monthly maximum of child care hours. To calculate a weekly amount of child care hours allowed, divide the monthly amount by 4.3. All travel time is already included in the hours allowed under this formula. Do not add additional hours for travel time.

**Example 1:** (Single Parent) After her first six (6) months in business, Tiffany's cake business has a monthly adjusted income of \$400.00. Divide 400 by \$7.25 to get 55.17 hours for the month. Then divide 55.17 by 4.3 weeks to get 12.83 hours per week; round this amount up to 13 hours per week. Do not add additional hours for travel.

**Example 2:** (Single Parent Self-Employed and going to school) Kenisha has been self-employed for eight (8) months selling cosmetics. Her monthly adjusted income is \$500. Divide \$500 by \$7.25 to get 68.97 hours for the month. Then divide 68.97 by 4.3 weeks to get 16.04 hours; round this amount up to 17 hours per week. Kenisha is also finishing college to get her business degree. She attends part-time 15 hours per week, which includes travel time. Therefore she can be authorized for that additional time for a total of 32 hours per week.

**Example 3:** (Two-Parent Household-Separate Self-Employed Businesses) Keisha and Rick are married and have 4 children. Rick has an auto repair business. Rick works at the auto repair from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday – Friday and also on Saturday mornings. The auto repair business produces a monthly adjusted income of \$1000. Keisha has her own small business selling scented candles and home décor. The monthly adjusted income from Keisha's business is an average of \$600. Keisha works about 15 hours per week, always in the evenings after Rick is home. Since they indicated they do not have overlapping schedules, they do not qualify for an authorization.

**Example 4:** (Two-Parent Household Shared Self-Employed Business) Keisha and Rick share a business selling honey and work the exact same hours. Their total adjusted income of \$500 is split in half because they are equal partners. Keisha's adjusted income of \$250 makes her eligible for nine (9) hours and Rick's adjusted income of \$250 makes him eligible for nine (9) hours of child care. Their work hours overlap by 9 hours, therefore they qualify for a nine (9) hour authorization.

**Example 5:** (Single Parent Self-Employed Business) Bob is self-employed at Bob's Burgers and makes \$15,000 a year. He pays himself a draw/salary of \$10,000 per year. That draw/salary amount is entered in Employment Page in CWW. The remaining \$5,000 self-employment income is entered on the self-employment page in CWW. Use the total Self-Employment Income of \$15,000 to calculate the number of authorized hours. Divide \$15,000/12 to find a monthly income of \$1,250. Then divide  $\$1,250 / 4.3 / 7.25 = 40.09$ . Bob is eligible for a maximum of 41 hours.

### **2.2.8.3 Self-Employment in Foster, Subsidized Guardianship, Interim Caretaker, and Relatives with Court-Ordered Placement Receiving Kinship Care**

Foster Care, relatives with court-ordered placement receiving Kinship Care, Interim Caretakers, and Subsidized Guardianship cases are not subject to the authorization limits described in [section 2.2.8.2](#) for their foster care, subsidized guardianship, interim caretaker, or relative with a court-ordered placement and Kinship Care children.

Justification for authorized hours must be documented in CWW case comments [or documented in ECF](#). The authorization limits for self-employment continue to apply to authorizations for the biological or adopted children of these families.

### **2.2.9 Authorization Types**

Child care authorizations are the child care administrative agencies written approval for child care provider reimbursement. Authorizations may be attendance-based or enrollment-based. The next sections provide descriptions of each type and when to use them.

### **2.2.9.1 Attendance-Based Authorizations**

Attendance-based authorizations reimburse the child care provider on an hourly basis for only the hours of the child's reported attendance in a given week, up to the maximum number of hours authorized by the child care administrative agency.

All authorizations to certified child care providers must be attendance-based authorizations. Authorizations to licensed family child care providers must be attendance-based, however if the child has a special need that meets the requirements for a higher reimbursement rate the authorization may be enrollment-based.

#### **2.2.9.1.1 Attendance Based Authorizations to Licensed Group Providers**

Authorizations to licensed group child care providers may be established on an attendance basis if:

- The child care need is expected to vary widely
- On three separate occasions the agency has documented situations in which the provider significantly over-reported the attendance of a child

The weekly ceiling and hourly rate is increased by 10% on attendance-based authorizations to account for absent days if the licensed child care provider's private rate is higher than the county maximum rate.

#### **2.2.9.1.2 Zero Hour Authorizations**

If a school-age child does not need care before or after school, the worker can create a zero-hour authorization to a provider who is providing care for a school-age child during occasional breaks in school. The zero-hour authorization is also known as the school closed authorization. Child care providers must not claim reimbursement using school bank hours when a school-age child is ill and cannot attend school. In these cases, the worker needs to create a separate authorization that covers the sick days.

### **2.2.9.2 Enrollment Based Authorizations**

Enrollment-based authorizations reimburse the child care provider a weekly amount for a set number of hours per week. A provider can be reimbursed during occasional absences for a child with an enrollment-based authorization so long as the child attended the child care provider at least one hour during the week of the absence.



In general, all children attending licensed group providers must have enrollment based authorizations unless the situation meets the requirements under section 2.2.9.1.1.

**Example:** A child that needs 10 hours of after-school care every week and who is authorized to attend a licensed group provider must have an enrollment-based authorization for 10 hours per week.

### **2.2.10 Retro Authorizations and Retro Attendance Entry**

Retro authorizations and retro attendance entry refers to activity that occurs in the past. However, authorizations and attendance entry that is older than three months requires additional user privileges added to the worker CSAW profile.

Every local administrative agency is required to have two workers with this higher level security access to enter retro authorizations in the Child Care Statewide Administration (CSAW) system and retro attendance and attendance confirmation in the CCPI system. Workers with retro privileges are able to create authorizations for periods of time more than three months into the past and are able to enter attendance into CCPI that is older than three months into the past. All other agency workers are limited to being able to enter authorizations and attendance that are up to three months old.

In order for a retro authorization to be written, the child care provider must:

- Be licensed or certified during the retro period
- Must have provided child care during the retro period
- The YoungStar Contract must have been received prior to the retro period

If any of these items are missing, no authorization or payments can be backdated.

Valid reasons for a worker to enter retro authorizations and retro attendance are the following:

- Fair hearing decisions that require an agency to make a payment
- An unforeseen and extremely unusual circumstance that results in an agency delay in writing the authorization

- An unforeseen and extremely unusual circumstance that results in a child care provider to have untimely attendance reporting

### 2.2.11 Authorized Hours: Part Time and Full Time Authorizations

Both enrollment-based and attendance-based authorizations may be for any number of hours per week based on the family's needs.

	Age of child	Hours Auth'd	Rate Code
Licensed	Age 6 or younger	1 - 24	B
	Age 6 or younger	25 - 50	R
	Age 7 or older	1 - 20	B
	Age 7 or older	21 - 50	R
Certified	Any Age	1 - 50	C

These rate code requirements are enforced in CSAW.

**Note:** Do not limit enrollment-based authorizations to only 35 hours per week unless that is the number of hours of care that is determined to be needed by the parent.

### **2.2.11.1 Authorizations for Over 50 Hours of Care**

Children who need more than 50 hours per week of care may receive two authorizations, one full time and a second for the balance of the time needed up to 25 hours. No child may be authorized for more than 75 hours per week in a case.

**Example:** Janie's mother works two jobs. Her full time job is 40 hours per week plus two hours a day travel time, for a sum of 50 hours. Her other job has variable hours from 10-15 hours per week and there is no travel time. Janie goes to the same child care provider when her mother works either job. The first authorization is set for 50 hours per week and because care is needed on a regular basis, it is established on an enrollment basis. The second authorization is set for 15 hours per week, and because the need for care varies from week to week it is set up on an attendance basis.

### **2.2.12 In-Home Child Care**

*Child care provided in the child's own home* may be authorized only under the following circumstances:

- Three or more children are being cared for
- Other licensed or certified care is not available within a reasonable geographic area
- Child care is needed during hours when no other care is available, such as second and third shift hours, and weekend care
- A child's special need could only be met in his or her home
- The in-home child care provider is certified

### **2.2.13 School Program Collaboration (Head Start, Early Head Start, 3K and 4K)**

Child care authorizations must always be based on the parent's need for child care while the parent is at work or participating in a combination of work and school, a W-2 program, or other approved activity. When the child care program is co-located with a school program that is regulated by a public school board, or is part of a Head Start program, the school hours can be included in the authorization if all of the following factors occur:

- The hours included in the authorization are times when the child's parent is engaged in an approved activity and child care is needed for the parent to participate in his or her approved activity.
- The school program and the child care program are co-located.
- The total number of hours of the child's school program(s) is not more than four (4) hours per day.
- The total length of the child's authorized child care day is (5) five or more hours per day (the school program hours are included in this total).

If any of these requirements are not met, the authorization must be limited to the hours needed for child care so the parent can participate in his or her approved activity that occur only before or after the school program.

The parent must provide the necessary documentation from the school program using form DCF-F-2974. If the form is not returned to the agency within seven (7) business days, the authorization shall be limited to the child care hours without regard to the school program hours. It is the parent's responsibility to report any changes in the schedule that would impact their eligibility for the hours the child participates in the school program. Failing to report a change in circumstances within 10 days that may affect a parent's eligibility status may result in an overpayment.

If the school program is located at a different site than where child care is provided, the authorization must cover only the hours the child attends the child care program and not cover the hours the child attends the school program.

**Example 1:** Charlie attends the Head Start program located at 1256 Water Street and the child care program that is located at 1536 Water Street. Charlie's authorization is limited to the hours he will spend at the child care program located at 1536 Water Street because the child care and the Head Start programs are in different locations.

**Example 2:** Dara attends a 4K program that is located at the child care center where she is enrolled. Dara's Mom needs child care from 7:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Monday – Friday. The 4K program is provided at Dara's child care center from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday. Dara's authorization may be written to include all of the hours that Dara's Mom needs child care which is 7:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Monday – Friday.

The length of the school program will be determined by one of two ways.

1. The scheduled hours of the school program described in the Head Start grant agreement, the public school board contract, or other signed contract between the child care program and the funding source
2. By identifying the hours that school programming is available to non-Wisconsin Shares children at no cost – these are the Head Start hours

#### **2.2.14 Authorizations for Special Needs Children**

Children with a diagnosed special need, who are also otherwise eligible, may be eligible for child care subsidy up to the age of 19. If a child age 13 or older is verified to have a special need but the provider does not incur extra costs to provide care, the local agency should use the provider's or county maximum rate for 12-year-olds, whichever is less. See the CSAW Authorization Management User Guide for instructions for entering a special needs rate. See section 2.4.5.1 for information on Higher Rates for Special Needs Children.

#### **2.2.15 Shared Placement Authorizations**

Authorizations that involve the shared placement of children require extra attention to ensure accuracy and to prevent overpayments. The authorizing worker and the parent have responsibility to communicate the shared placement information to the child care provider.

To ensure the accuracy of attendance reporting for reimbursement from the Wisconsin Shares program in a shared placement case, the authorization worker is responsible for:

1. Collecting a shared placement schedule that illustrates the days that the child is with each parent and collecting updates when the schedule changes;
2. Writing the authorization for the maximum number of hours the parent needs in order to attend the approved activities;
3. Using an attendance based authorization;
4. Communicating the shared placement schedule with the staff that enter or confirm the CCPI system attendance entry; and,
5. Informing the child care provider of the shared placement schedule.

A shared placement schedule can be collected on a monthly calendar or by using the Child Care Authorization Worksheet. The authorization must cover the maximum number of hours each parent will need for the approved activity plus travel time. Any hours incorrectly reported to the Wisconsin Shares program for reimbursement based on misinformation (or lack of information) from the client, may result in an overpayment against the client.

Only when there is one parent with child care subsidy and placement of the children is always for the same days each week and the parent has a constant, unchanging need for weekly child care based on the approved activity schedule may the authorization be enrollment-based. Local agency workers must always record a note in CWW case comments for all shared placement authorizations.

#### **2.2.15.1 Two Parents Using the Same Provider**

In shared placement cases, where both assistance groups have their own child care subsidy case, the authorizations will usually be attendance-based. Always use attendance-based authorizations in shared placement cases when the children move from household to household from week-to-week or day-to-day.

To assist, the Attendance Report Form (ARF) displays the Primary Person's (Parent's) name to make it easier for the child care provider to record child care program attendance that corresponds to the correct parent. For child care providers who record attendance in CCPI, there is also case identifying information to ensure that attendance is recorded correctly.

### 2.2.15.2 One Parent

In shared placement cases, where only one parent receives child care subsidy, the authorization will usually be attendance-based. In these situations the provider must also be informed of the shared placement schedule and be instructed to report attendance only for the hours when the child was in child care and in the placement of the parent with the subsidy. The child care provider must only report attendance for reimbursement from the Wisconsin Shares program for those weeks (days) when the child is under the care of the parent with the Wisconsin Shares subsidy.

### 2.2.16 Changing and Ending an Authorization

Workers must timely change/end authorizations in order to ensure that the appropriate level of child care benefit is issued to providers on behalf of parents and avoid overpayments. See chart below for appropriate time frames for these actions.

Time Parent Reported Change	Authorization Change Date	Example Scenario
Change reported prior to taking effect	<u>A change in authorization is only necessary for an increase or decrease of authorized hours or change in Provider. All other changes will happen automatically with updated information from CWW and WISCCRS.</u>  End Authorization Saturday prior to the change taking effect. Create appropriate new authorization.	Client has a part-time authorization. On Thursday, September 3, 2015 she reports to the local agency that she will be working full time starting on Tuesday, September 8, 2015. End authorization Saturday, September 5, 2015, and create a new full time authorization for Sunday, September 6, 2015.
Change reported after taking effect,	<u>A change in authorization is only necessary for an increase or decrease of authorized hours or</u>	Client has a full time authorization. On Thursday, September 3,

but within the 10-day reporting period.	<p><u>change in Provider. All other changes will happen automatically with updated information from CWW and WISCCRS.</u></p> <p>End Authorization the Saturday following when it was reported. Create appropriate new authorization. Assess if CSAW PIES or an Override should be used for an underpayment.</p>	<p>2015, she reports to the local agency that she began working part-time Sunday, August 30, 2015. End authorization Saturday, September 5, 2015, and create a new part-time authorization for Sunday September 6, 2015.</p>
Change reported/ discovered after the 10-day reporting period has passed.	<p>End authorization the Saturday following when it was reported/discovered.</p> <p>Assess for an overpayment. Potentially create appropriate new authorization.</p>	<p>Example 1: Client has a full time authorization. On Thursday, September 3, 2015, the agency discovers the client did not report their job loss that occurred Monday, August 17, 2015. End the authorization Saturday, September 5, 2015. Investigate and assess for overpayment/fraud.</p> <p>Example 2: Client has a full time authorization. On Thursday, September 3, 2015 the client reports to the local agency that she started working part time on Monday, August 17, 2015. End the authorization Saturday,</p>



		September 5, 2015. Assess for overpayment. Create a new part-time authorization for Sunday, September 6, 2015.
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### **2.2.17 Authorization Notices**

Authorization notices inform parents and child care providers of the essential details of the child care authorization, such as the names and birth dates of each child in the family, the maximum weekly amount that will be subsidized and the child care provider's location. Authorization notices are sent to parents and their child care providers when an authorization is started, ended, or changed, including those that are automatically recalculated due to a change in the child's age or a change in the family income.

Authorization notices are generated once per week and are mailed on Mondays following the date a worker enters an authorization when there is a change of any kind to the authorization, and again when an authorization is due to end. When a family loses eligibility, a notice is automatically generated during adverse action. When the authorization begin-date is more than two weeks into the future, the authorization notice won't be generated until 14 days prior to the authorization begin-date.

## **2.3 Parent Share**

The 'parent share' is the amount not covered by the Wisconsin Shares subsidy payment that is owed to the child care provider by the parent. This amount includes the calculated Wisconsin Shares copayment, the remaining price for care the provider charges above the Wisconsin Shares payment, and any other fees or amounts the provider charges the parent. Parents are responsible for knowing the amount that the child care provider will charge them that is above the Wisconsin Shares subsidy payment. Parents are responsible for paying the child care provider any amount charged for child care that is above the Wisconsin Shares subsidy payment.

### 2.3.1 Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program Copayments

Copayments are based on the family income, family size, and the number of children in child care. The copayment schedule is used to find the copayment amount.

- If the family gross monthly income falls between two lines, use the higher dollar amount. The family income must be equal to or less than the amount on the line for the family size.
- The corresponding copayment responsibility is listed for the number of children receiving the child care subsidy on the right hand side of the schedule.
- Families with income lower than 70% of FPL are assigned the lowest level of copayment.

### 2.3.2 Copayment Responsibility

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>		<b>Copayment Amount</b>
FOS	Foster Care, Subsidized Guardian, or Interim Caretaker	Use this code for any child in foster care, subsidized guardianship, or living with an Interim Caretaker	Zero copayment
KIN	Child living with a relative under court-ordered placement (with or without the Kinship Care Payment)	Use this code for children living with a relative under a court order for placement	Zero copayment
NCK	Child living with a relative, but no court order (with or without the Kinship Care Payment)	Use this code for children residing with a relative when there is no court order	Minimum copayment: Copayment amount is based on 70% FPL and not the actual household income
LNF	Parent is participating in Learnfare	Use this code for teen parents who are participating in Learnfare	Zero copayment

REG	Regular	Use this code for W-2 families, working families, FSET participants, and any other individuals who do not fit within another description	Regular copayment: Copayment amount is based on actual household income, family size, and number of children in care
THS	Teen parent attending high school	Use this code for teen parents under 20 years old who are enrolled in high school	Minimum copayment: Copayment amount is based on 70% FPL and not the actual household income
WWE	Parent was in a W-2 placement and just started employment	Use this code for up to 5 weeks for parents who have just left a W-2 placement and started new employment	Minimum copayment: Copayment amount is based on 70% FPL and not the actual household income

Note: When a family group has a mix of regular and minimum copayment types, the regular copayment amount will be used in the provider reimbursement calculations.

### 2.3.3 Part-Time Copayments

Children who are authorized for 20 or fewer hours per week are assigned one-half of their pro-rated copayment amounts. If a child is authorized to two different child care providers, all of the hours the child is authorized each week will be added together to determine if an authorization is considered part-time or full time.

### 2.3.4 Differential Copayments

A differential copayment is automatically used by CSAW for all authorizations written for a past period.

Differential copayments are one of the reasons why rates for children change when there hasn't been an increase in the county maximum or the provider rates, or a child's birthday, or a change in the total family copayment amount. With retro authorizations,

the child whose retro authorization was entered into CSAW first will have a full copayment, and the balance of the family copayment is applied to the second child's authorization. When a retro authorization is added for a third child, co-pay amount of the 2 children is subtracted from the copayment based on 3 children and the difference is applied to the third child. This approach is continued for each additional child up to the fifth child. The copayment amount does not fluctuate after 5 children (see screen shot of copayment chart below).

**Example:** For one child the copayment amount is \$6, then a retro authorization is written for a second child and now the family copayment is \$11. We've already applied \$6 and the difference of \$5 is applied to the second child's authorization. Then if a third child is added, the family copayment amount is \$17. Now we've already allocated \$11 and so the balance of \$6 is applied to the third authorization.

WEEKLY CO-PAY AMOUNT				
CHILDREN IN SUBSIDIZED CARE:				
1	2	3	4	5 or more
6	11	17	21	28
6	14	20	26	32
9	15	22	29	35

## 2.4 Reimbursement Rates

The maximum weekly and hourly rates are organized by licensed group, licensed family, certified providers, and by age of the child. Factors included in this calculation also include the county's percentage of urbanization and local provider prices from a statewide provider rate survey.

Hourly rates are determined by dividing the weekly rate by 35 hours. Maximum hourly rates for regularly certified providers are set at 75% of the licensed family hourly rate; and hourly rates for provisionally certified providers are 50% of the licensed family hourly rate. Weekly ceilings are not set for certified providers, however, the weekly reimbursement payments are capped at the licensed family weekly maximum.

Maximum rates for child care providers located within tribes are grouped with the county in which the child care provider is geographically located. The Department has the authority to freeze the county maximum reimbursement rates.

#### 2.4.1 Maximum Rates

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program reimbursement rate calculation for licensed child care providers begins with the lowest of the following three amounts:

1. The county maximum (weekly ceiling) for the age group and provider type, refer to the [Maximum Rate Sheet](#) (CSAW will add an additional 10% on the weekly ceiling if the authorization is attendance-based for licensed providers).
2. The price the child care provider reported to the subsidy agency for the age group.
3. Beginning reimbursement rate. The beginning reimbursement rate is the county maximum hourly rate multiplied by the number of authorized hours (CSAW will add an additional 10% if the authorization is attendance-based for licensed providers-see example below)

Once the lowest of the three amounts above is chosen, the parent's copayment is removed to get the final calculated Wisconsin Shares payment amount.

**Example:** Jackson is a 1-year-old child and has an attendance-based authorization for 12 hours per week at a licensed group center. The maximum hourly rate for Jackson's age is \$5.20 per hour and the county maximum rate (weekly ceiling) is \$182.00. CSAW will calculate the beginning reimbursement rate by multiplying 12 hours by \$5.20 to get \$62.40 per week. This is the Beginning Reimbursement Rate. CSAW will adjust the beginning reimbursement by 10% since this is an attendance-based authorization for a licensed provider ( $62.40 \times 10\% = \$68.64$ ).

LICENSED GROUP							
0-2		2-3		4-5		6+	
Weekly	Hourly	Weekly	Hourly	Weekly	Hourly	Weekly	Hourly
Ceiling	Rate	Ceiling	Rate	Ceiling	Rate	Ceiling	Rate
\$182.00	\$5.20	\$154.00	\$4.40	\$137.00	\$3.91	\$137.00	\$3.91

The child care provider's weekly part-time rate is \$80. Looking at the county maximum (weekly ceiling) of \$182, the provider's price of \$80 and the beginning reimbursement rate of \$68.64 the

lowest is \$68.64. The next step for CSAW is to subtract the family copayment amount. Jackson's mother earns a monthly income of \$1700 (130% FPL). With a household of two, and one child in care, the family copayment is \$41 per week, but this is a part-time authorization (less than 20 hours), so this amount is reduced by half (\$41.00 divided by 2 = \$20.50)  $\$68.64 - \$20.50 = \$48.14$ . The Wisconsin Shares subsidy payment will be \$48.14 if Jackson attends all the authorized hours. Note: The YoungStar adjustment is based on actual attendance, so the YoungStar adjustment calculation won't be considered until after attendance has been reported.

#### **2.4.1.1 Child Care Provider and Parent in Different Counties**

When authorizing child care to a provider who is not located in the same county as the family, CSAW will compare the county/tribe maximum rates where the parent lives to the county/tribe maximum rate where the provider is located and use the higher of the two in the rate calculation.

#### **2.4.1.2 Private Provider Prices above the County Maximum Rate**

Wisconsin Shares does not reimburse at higher rates than the county maximum rate, with the exception of qualified special needs situations and some in-home situations. A parent may choose a child care provider whose private price is higher than the county/tribal maximum rate, however, the parent has the responsibility to pay the provider for the difference between the Wisconsin Shares payment and the provider price and any other fees charged by the provider. The collection of parent payments is the responsibility of the child care provider.

#### **2.4.2 Licensed Child Care Provider's Private Pay Prices**

The Department does not set child care provider prices. All licensed child care providers must submit their full time and part-time weekly rates in writing to the agency before authorizations can be written and before the effective date of a rate change. The local agency must record the provider's rates in CSAW at least one week before the new rate effective date. The effective date of the new rate cannot be a past date. Child care providers must submit an updated written rate sheet to the local agency before their rates are changed.

#### **2.4.2.1 Calculating a Part-Time Rate**

If the child care provider does not submit a part-time rate, the local agency staff must calculate a part-time rate using the following formula: Using the full time weekly rate, divide by 35; then use that amount and multiply by 20; the result is the part-time rate that must be entered into CSAW. If no part-time rates are entered into CSAW, no part-time authorization can be written. The local agency is responsible to update the provider's prices in CSAW in a timely manner.

When the child care provider does not report a part-time rate, but reports an hourly price, the agency may multiply the hourly rate by 20 and enter that amount in CSAW for a part-time rate.

When the child care provider reports a daily rate, calculate a weekly rate by multiplying the daily rate by three to arrive at a part-time rate.

#### **2.4.3 Certified Child Care Provider Prices**

Regularly or provisionally certified providers do not submit their private rates and their rates are not a factor in determining the subsidy reimbursement amount. The maximum hourly rate for regularly certified providers is set at 75% of the licensed family hourly rate and hourly rates for provisionally certified providers are 50% of the licensed family hourly rate. Weekly ceilings are not set for certified providers, however, the weekly payment is capped at the licensed family weekly maximum.

#### **2.4.4 Authorization Rate Changes**

Authorization rates fluctuate based on:

- New authorizations and/or children added to the case.
- One or more children in the case have a change in authorized hours, which changes how the copayment is distributed among the children.
- The child care provider's rates changed.
- The child care provider's YoungStar rating changed.
- An out-of-state child care provider's accreditations changed.
- The relative indicator status was changed.
- There was a FPL mass change – this happens annually.

- There was a Maximum Rate mass change.
- There was a change in provider category (provisional to regular certification or vice versa).
- A retro authorization was entered.
- A child's birthday put them into a new age category.
- A change in household composition.
- There is an increase in household income that changes the FPL and thus changes the copayment amount.

**Note:** If a certified provider becomes licensed, the system will not automatically calculate the new higher rate. Before an authorization can be changed to use the licensed reimbursement rate, the provider must submit their private pay rates to the subsidy agency. Then, the worker must manually end the authorization for the certified location and create a new authorization for the licensed location. This also applies to situations when a licensed family provider changes to a licensed group.

Once these changes have been entered into the correct Child Care Systems, the information will interface with CSAW and automatically update the rate during the following Saturday batch cycle.

## **2.4.5 Override Rate**

Override rates allow the CSAW system to disregard the lowest weekly rate amount to allow higher reimbursement rates for special needs cases, to lower reimbursement rates for discounts, and to adjust reimbursement rates for in-home child care when in-home care is provided for 15 or more hours per week.

### **2.4.5.1 Higher Rates for Special Needs Children**

Providers who care for children with a special need do not automatically qualify for a higher reimbursement rate. The local agency workers consider higher reimbursement rates for providers caring for special needs children only on a case-by-case basis. The provider may be eligible for a higher [reimbursement rate](#) to reflect the increased costs the child care provider incurs in providing care to a child with special needs.



The parent must provide documentation from a physician, special educator, or other licensed professional of the special need and identify the specific additional care that is needed for physical, behavioral, or educational needs.

The child care provider must provide a rationale of the higher reimbursement request and documentation of the extra costs associated with providing care for the child. The reason for the higher rate must be documented in CWW case comments and the Wisconsin Shares Special Needs Higher Rate Request form must be scanned into ECF.

All new higher rate authorizations to licensed child care providers must be enrollment based and use a weekly rate. Authorizations to certified providers will continue to be attendance based. ~~If care is provided by a licensed provider, the weekly county maximum rates may be exceeded.~~ Record the higher rate authorization in CSAW as an Override rate; see the CSAW Authorization Management User Guide.

If a child age 13 or older is verified to have special needs but the provider does not incur extra costs to provide care, the local agency should use the provider's rate or county maximum rate for 12-year-old children, whichever is less.

The Wisconsin Shares Special Needs Higher Rate Request form, (DCF-F-2976) must be completed to request and document a higher reimbursement rate for a special needs child. If a higher rate is approved by the local agency, the increased rate is valid for one year. A new form must be completed every 12 months to evaluate the needs of the child and determine any adjustments to the cost of child care. A new form must also be completed if there is a change in child care providers to determine the cost of care at the new child care program.

In addition to providing the agency with a statement that the child has a special need by a physician or medical provider, the following supporting documentation helps to identify and clarify the specific accommodations that are needed:

- An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) from birth to 3;
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) from a school district;

- A 504 plan (child has an alternative plan in place to provide some assistance to participate fully in school).

The child care provider must provide the rationale for the higher rate and identify the specific additional care that is needed for physical, behavioral, or educational needs.

This form also includes an option for the child care provider to request training and technical assistance from the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency or YoungStar Technical Consultant regarding child care for special needs children.

After the child care provider has completed the “Provider Rationale” section, the parent is responsible for submitting the form to the Wisconsin Shares child care coordinator or Wisconsin Shares child care authorization worker at the local agency.

#### **2.4.5.2 Discounts**

A discounted rate may be applied in the following circumstances:

1. When a licensed child care provider offers a discounted price that is lower than the county maximum hourly rate or weekly ceiling.
2. When another program, such as AmeriCorps, is providing a partial child care subsidy and the licensed child care provider’s price, after the other program’s subsidy is applied, is lower than the county maximum rate.

Discounts are often given when more than one child from a family is enrolled in child care or when the parent is employed by a child care provider.

When a parent informs the authorization worker that the child care provider is offering a discount, the authorization worker must collect the discounted rate from the child care provider ~~must ask the provider~~. If another program (such as AmeriCorps) is paying part of the cost of child care the authorization worker must find out the amount the other program will pay in order to determine the rate that should be used for Wisconsin Shares reimbursement amount.

If, after applying the discount, the licensed child care provider's price is not lower than the county maximum rate, disregard the reported discount and do not use an override rate.

Discounts on Wisconsin Shares reimbursements are limited to licensed child care providers only.

Disregard a discount that a child care provider applies to the parent's share (i.e. **copayment** amount). This is not considered a discount for purposes of the Wisconsin Shares program.

**Enrollment Based Authorization Example 1:** Randy's Licensed Group Care is giving the Jones' family a 50% discount. The child care provider's weekly price is \$300.00. The weekly amount after the discount is applied to the provider's original weekly price is \$150.00. The county maximum weekly rate is \$250.00. Since \$150.00 is less than the county maximum of \$250.00, the discounted amount should be entered in the *Override Rate* field for the new authorization.

**Enrollment Based Authorization Example 2:** There may be instances where AmeriCorps or another organization provides financial assistance for a portion of a parent's child care costs. In these cases, subtract the amount that the other organization will pay from the provider's price – this is the discounted rate. Compare the discounted rate to the county maximum rate. If the discounted rate is less than the county maximum rate, enter the discounted amount into CSAW. If the county maximum rate is less than the discounted rate, disregard the discount and allow CSAW to calculate the regular rate.

County weekly max: \$300.00

Provider's weekly rate: \$325.00

Subtract AmeriCorps subsidy: \$200.00

\$125.00

The remaining \$125.00 is less than the county maximum weekly rate of \$300. Enter \$125.00 into the *Override Rate* field in CSAW.

**Attendance Based Authorization Example:** Randy's Licensed Group Care is giving the Jones' family a 50% discount. The agency needs to obtain the hourly rate from the provider. It may not be accurate to use the weekly rate and divide by 35, the number of hours in a full time authorization. The provider may use a different calculation for their hourly price. The provider's discounted hourly rate is \$4.28. Compare the discounted hourly rate to the county maximum hourly reimbursement rate of \$7.14. Since \$4.28 is less than the county maximum of \$7.14, the discounted amount should be entered in the *Override Rate* field for the new authorization.

### **2.4.5.3 In-Home Care for 15 or More Hours Per Week**

When child care is provided in the child's own home and the child care provider is working 15 or more hours per week, the parent must ensure that the child care provider is reimbursed at the state minimum wage. The Wisconsin Shares subsidy can be adjusted by using the override rate to allow for the use of the minimum wage in the rate calculation. If a child qualifies for a higher rate due to a special need, that rate can exceed state minimum wage.

When authorizing for less than 15 hours per week, use the certified rate type and CSAW will apply the County certified hourly rate for the ages of the children.

Local administrative agencies should remind parents choosing in-home child care of the parents' responsibilities as employers of the child care providers, including the parents' responsibility to complete the appropriate tax withholdings.

## **2.5 Tiered Reimbursement**

All providers that participate in YoungStar receive a rating, which affects their Wisconsin Shares reimbursement amount. Providers are rated on a scale from 1 to 5 Stars:

- 5 Star Provider: Reimbursement increased up to 25%
- 4 Star Provider: Reimbursement increased by 10%
- 3 Star Provider: Reimbursement remains unchanged
- 2 Star Provider: Reimbursement reduced by 5%
- 1 Star Provider: Not eligible for Wisconsin Shares subsidy reimbursement

The process of adjusting the provider's Wisconsin Shares reimbursement because of the provider's YoungStar rating is known as Tiered Reimbursement.

The YoungStar payment adjustment is applied to the provider's issuance calculation after attendance has been reported.

### **2.5.1 Participation in the YoungStar Quality Improvement System**

The Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program reimburses child care providers that are either participating in YoungStar or have a current, signed Wisconsin Shares Participation contract. Out-of-state and in-home child care providers must sign a Wisconsin Shares Participation contract; all other providers must sign the YoungStar Contract.

All Certified Family providers, Licensed Family providers, Licensed Group Child Care centers, Licensed Day Camps, and public school programs must have a signed YoungStar Contract on file *before* they are eligible for a Wisconsin Shares authorization. Please see section 2.1.2.4 for an exception to YoungStar participation.

### **2.5.2 Contracts for New Child Care Providers**

Wisconsin Shares authorizations can only be established *after* the YoungStar Contract or the Wisconsin Shares Contract has been entered into the YoungStar case management system. Therefore, new child care providers should return their Contract to the local YoungStar office at the same time they turn in their application for licensure or certification.

New providers will be reimbursed at the 2 Star level, effective when their program meets all certification or licensing requirements and turns in a YoungStar Contract, until they are rated. If a new provider is subsequently rated at a higher Star level, the provider's payments will be adjusted effective on the Sunday of the week that the new rating is entered into the automated system.

If a provider changes from Certified to Certified In-Home, they must submit a Wisconsin Shares Contract and return it to DCF.

### **2.5.3 YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Contract Renewal**

A grace period is allowed for processing contract renewals. During the grace period, no new authorizations can be written.

If the provider returns the YoungStar Contract Renewal during the grace period, the worker must retroactively authorize for child care during the grace period, if necessary. If the YoungStar Contract Renewal is not returned by the end of the grace period, all Wisconsin Shares authorizations for that provider will end.

If a YoungStar Contract Renewal is returned after the grace period, authorizations will be allowed starting the Sunday of the week during which the contract was received.

Providers are not eligible for authorization or reimbursement during the period from the end of the grace period until the receipt of the new YoungStar Contract by the local YoungStar office.

For more details on YoungStar, visit the YoungStar website at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar>

For more details on YoungStar policy, see the YoungStar policy guide at <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/policy>

## ***2.6 Attendance Reporting for Reimbursement***

Child care providers must submit attendance reports either online through CCPI or on paper attendance reporting forms. Reimbursement is completed after attendance reporting.

### **2.6.1 Three Attendance Reporting Modes**

There are three attendance reporting modes. Each mode is available in CCPI and on the paper attendance report form. Local administrative agencies determine the attendance reporting modes for child care providers in their geographic area.

### **2.6.1.1 Weekly Mode**

The weekly attendance reporting mode requires that the provider reports the total number of attended hours during the week for a child.

Weekly mode allows the provider the user to enter the hours after the attendance period has passed.

#### **2.6.1.1.1 Weekly Mode Attendance Rounding**

Rounding is required when reporting attendance in the weekly mode using the ARF.

##### **Weekly Attendance Report Rounding:**

Child attends 8 hours and 10 minutes, round down to 8 hours.

Child attends 8 hours and 15 minutes, round up to 8.5 hours.

Child attends 8 hours and 45 minutes, round up to 9 hours.

After the daily hours are rounded, add the daily totals for a weekly total and the round up to the next full hour. For example, 43.5 hours becomes 44 hours.

### **2.6.1.2 Daily Mode**

The daily mode collects a child's exact amount of daily hours and minutes. No daily rounding is needed when using the ARF or CCPI. No weekly totals need to be calculated when using the ARF because this information will be entered into CCPI by the agency and the system will add the daily hours and minutes for the weekly total.

### **2.6.1.3 In and Out Mode**

This mode requires the child care provider to record the actual arrival and departure times for each child. There is no difference whether using the paper ARF or CCPI with this mode.

In and out mode allows the provider to enter attendance for current and previous dates. Agencies may consider changing a child care provider's attendance reporting to In/Out mode if the provider meets any of the following criteria:

- The provider has a history of caring for more than the allowable number of children based upon licensing or certification regulations.

- The provider is regularly listed on the 6+ (certified) or 12+ (licensed family) reports.
- The provider is licensed or certified to provide 16 or more hours of care per day of operation.
- The provider has a history of or there are concerns about inaccurate attendance reporting.
- The provider experiences difficulty summarizing and/or rounding daily and weekly hours.
- The provider needs additional supervision in attendance reporting.

### **2.6.2 Changing Attendance Reporting Modes**

When changing a provider's attendance mode, the local agency must be aware of the neighboring counties that may also have authorizations to the child care provider and must communicate with them about the change.

### **2.6.3 Attendance Report Forms (ARF's)**

Paper Attendance Report Forms are to be returned to the local child care administrative agency for processing. Local agency staff transcribes the paper attendance report into the CCPI system.

**Note:** The Sign-in/Sign-out form is an attendance documentation requirement of licensing and certification. The Attendance Report Form is used to report attendance for reimbursement from the Wisconsin Shares program.

#### **2.6.3.1 Incomplete or Inaccurate Paper Attendance Report Forms**

Incomplete or inaccurate attendance that has been reported on the Attendance Report Form (ARF) shall be returned to the provider for corrections and unsigned forms must be returned to the provider for a signature.

Local agency workers have limited discretion to correct errors. Examples of changes that may be made to the ARF by local agency workers include:



- Simple mathematical errors
- Omission of weekly total
- Blanks replaced with zeroes

The ARF must be sent back to the child care provider for corrections when the ARF

- Is illegible
- Has significant mathematical errors
- Has significant omissions

All changes made by a local agency worker must be initialed and dated by the worker or local agency representative. Record a note in the comment section of the child care provider's CSAW record that a change was made and initialed or that the ARF was returned to the provider for corrections.

The corrected ARF must be re-signed and dated by the child care provider.

#### **2.6.4 No Reimbursement until Actual Attendance**

No child care subsidy reimbursement will be made on a new authorization until actual attendance takes place.

**Example:** Sally has a new enrollment-based authorization to attend Susie's Ducky Day Care. Sally does not attend child care the whole first week and the child care provider correctly records "0" for attendance for the week. The next week Sally attends the full week. There will be no reimbursement for the first week. This is true for any new enrollment-based authorization, including new authorizations to the same child care provider.

#### **2.6.5 Consecutive Weeks of Absence**

Payment is issued when one week of absence is entered on an enrollment-based authorization. No payment will be issued when two or more consecutive weeks of absence have been entered.

If a second consecutive week of absence on an enrollment-based authorization is entered (after payment has been made for the first week of absence), no payment will

be made for that week of attendance and a negative adjustment will be created by CSAW for the first week of absence.

### **2.6.6 Reporting School Bank Hours**

School bank hours are additional hours available for reimbursement when children are in child care because school is closed for short periods of time, such as snow days, teacher conferences, or spring and holiday breaks.

During the school term, school-age children may have either part-time authorization for before and/or after school care or may have an authorization that is available only for times when school is closed. If the school-age child has a part-time authorization, all regularly authorized hours must be utilized before school bank hours are used.

See the Zero Hour Authorization section 2.2.9.1.2 for more information.

Each calendar year, 320 school bank hours (about 100 hours per trimester) are available for care while school is closed.

School age children that are five (5) years old or older and attending kindergarten or a higher grade in school are considered “school age” in CSAW and school bank hours are created for these children each fall. Workers may change the status of children that are at least three (3) years old to “school age” in CSAW to allow the child care provider to report attendance for school closed hours.

School bank hours are not to be used when a child is ill and cannot attend school. In these cases, the worker must create a separate authorization that covers only the sick days.

If a child runs out of school bank hours, the authorizing worker must request more hours from the Child Care Help Desk. The worker must give a reason why the hours were not adequate before the child’s school bank hours will be increased.

**Example:** Zoe is 7 years old and attends child care every day after school. Her authorization is for 10 hours per week. When school is closed one day due to teacher conferences, she attends the child care program for the whole day. The child care provider reports the normal 10 hours plus the additional hours that Zoe was in attendance on the day that school was closed.

### **2.6.7 Late Attendance Reporting**

The child care administrative agency may refuse to act on attendance reports that are submitted more than three (3) months after the attendance report was issued. If the agency accepts the late reporting, they are required to collect the child care provider's sign-in sign-out sheets to support the attendance reports.

**Note:** Child care providers are not able to enter their own attendance in CCPI after three (3) months from the attendance period.

Local agencies have 10 calendar days to process completed attendance report forms from the date of submission. If the tenth calendar day falls on a weekend or holiday, the agency must complete processing the next business day. This time frame may be extended for incomplete or illegible attendance report forms, or report forms that lack required verification. In addition, the worker may require additional time to process the attendance report form if there is a program integrity concern related to the provider's submitted attendance.

## **2.7 Attendance Confirmation**

Attendance confirmation is a local agency activity to ensure that online attendance reporting by child care providers is accurate. The department expects both confirmation and non-confirmation local agencies to monitor attendance reporting.

### **2.7.1 Confirmation Agency**

Local administrative agencies decide whether or not to confirm CCPI attendance. When a local agency has opted to confirm CCPI attendance they are known as a Confirmation Agency. This means that a local agency staff person with the proper CCPI security access must go to the attendance screen on CCPI and confirm the data entered, child-

by-child, for each week of the two-week attendance period, by checking the appropriate confirmation indicators.

A CCPI report is available that lists provider data awaiting confirmation. Confirmation action must be taken by the local child care agency in order for a payment to be made to the provider.

### **2.7.2 Non-Confirmation Agency**

If an administrative agency chooses to be a non-confirmation agency it means that payments for attendance entered through CCPI will be issued during the regular batch issuance job without any active intervention by the local child care agency.

When agencies choose to be non-confirmation agencies, they remain responsible for developing an attendance monitoring system that observes unusual utilization patterns, tracks for errors or fraud, and provides appropriate follow-up action to ensure accurate attendance reporting.

The timing of non-confirmation attendance processing is the same as when the agencies have entered attendance themselves. All confirmation fields on the attendance screens will be either blank or protected for non-confirmation agencies.

### **2.7.3 Provider Location Confirmation**

Provider location confirmation allows agencies to either release individual providers from having attendance confirmation, or to require a particular child care provider to have attendance confirmation. Only the Entered County (the county that initially updated the CSAW record) or the Location County (the county in which the child care provider is located) may select providers to have the confirmation requirement. Both confirmation and non-confirmation counties may switch individual provider locations to being confirmation or non-confirmation.

For example, confirmation counties may choose to release providers that have accurate attendance reporting history to being non-confirmation. Similarly, non-confirmation

counties may choose to switch an individual provider location to confirmation if the agency has concerns with attendance reporting.

When an agency authorizes to a location with Provider Location Confirmation, attendance must be confirmed by the county of residence or tribal worker unless the consortium attendance processing arrangements are with another county. This includes non-confirmation counties that authorize to provider locations in other counties that are Provider Location Confirmation. Provider Location Confirmation is limited to two individuals per agency.

#### **2.7.4 Overriding the Issuance System to Allow Payment for Additional Attendance**

When a parent has utilized more child care than the authorized hours due to additional work hours during an attendance period, the additional hours may be reimbursable. The parent must contact the local agency to request this override and the child care provider must record the additional hours. Authorizations between 35 and 50 hours are considered full time, so an override will be needed for the attended hours beyond 50. Authorizations less than 35 hours may be overridden to allow extra reimbursement for attended hours above 35 hours and then again above 50 hours.

### ***2.8 Payments During Approved Absences***

Child care administrative agencies may authorize reimbursement to a child care provider during a child's absence from child care or a parent's absence from his or her approved activity in limited situations. Outside of these specific circumstances, the child care subsidy is limited to utilization while the parents are engaged in their approved activity and an overpayment to the parent will result when the child is in subsidized child care and the parent is not in their approved activity. Outside of these limited situations, child care providers must not report these hours for reimbursement from the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program.

Local administrative agency staff may refer to the CCPI User Guide regarding how to approve payment for an extended absence.

### **2.8.1 Absence from Employment**

Parents that are employed and are absent from work while using employer paid time off, such as sick time, personal time, or vacation time, may utilize child care without incurring an overpayment. The parent must continue to be employed while excused from work by the employer and must remain employed immediately thereafter with the same employer. The reimbursement payment is limited to the hours of employment in which the parent used employer paid time off. The parent is responsible for any child care hours that are used beyond the authorized hours.

This absence is acceptable for both enrollment-based and attendance-based authorizations.

### **2.8.2 Absence from an Approved Activity with Good Cause**

The authorization worker can grant exceptions to the approved activity requirement if the parent did not attend their approved activities with good cause.

It is the FEP worker's responsibility to determine whether good cause has been met by the parent when the parent has missed his or her W-2 activities.

This absence is acceptable for both enrollment-based and attendance-based authorizations.

### **2.8.3 Absence due to Jury Duty**

A parent in any approved activity may utilize their regularly authorized child care hours while serving on jury duty. The reimbursement payment is limited to hours the parent missed his or her approved activity for jury duty when the jury duty hours would have otherwise been hours the parent was engaged in the approved activity. The reimbursement will not cover child care for any additional hours the parent is on jury duty outside of the parent's normal approved activity hours.

This absence is acceptable for both enrollment-based and attendance-based authorizations.

#### 2.8.4 Request to Hold a Child Care Slot during an Extended Absence

When a parent has an extended absence from his or her approved activity or if a child will be absent from child care, the child care subsidy can be used to hold the child's place in child care in limited situations. The purpose of holding a slot for the child is to ensure that the child's place in the child care center will remain available following the child's temporary absence.

If the local agency is not able to negotiate a lower payment rate and agrees to make full payment during any of the times that holding a slot was approved, the provider must allow the child to attend child care.

With the exception of unforeseen illnesses, the parent must make a request to hold the child's slot in advance of the parent's leave or the child's absence. Each of the following criteria must be met before the request may be approved:

- The authorization must be an enrollment-based authorization when the request is made and must continue to be enrollment-based authorization after the temporary absence.
- The child must be returning to the same child care provider after the absence.
- The parent must be receiving Wisconsin Shares child care assistance prior to and after the leave.
- The parent must be **employed** prior to and after the leave.
- The parent must return to work for the same employer immediately after the leave. The job/tasks may change, but the employer must be the same. The intent to return to the same employer must be reasonably accurate at the time the approval to hold the slot was granted. The local agency may ask for a statement from the employer verifying that the parent will return to employment after the leave.
- If the medical leave, temporary lay-off, child illness, or family vacation is expected to be longer than allowed below, the request to hold the slot must be denied by the local agency.

Situation	Maximum Number of Weeks of Leave
a. Parent is temporarily laid off, but will be return to work within 4 weeks to the same employer.	4 weeks
b. Parent has a temporary break in employment, but will return to an approved activity within 4 weeks. (Note: this does not include situations when a parent loses employment and is seeking new employment.)	4 weeks
c. Parent is on medical leave, as documented by a physician, but will be returning to work with the same employer within 6 weeks.	6 weeks
d. Once per calendar year, family is on vacation, but will be returning within 2 weeks.	2 weeks
e. Child is ill, as documented by a physician, but will be returning to the same child care provider within 6 weeks.	6 weeks

### 2.8.5 Consecutive Leaves

The administrative agency must not approve multiple, consecutive leaves of absence unless the parent returned to work for at least one (1) full week in between the requested leaves of absence and the child attended child care for at least 50% of the time during the parent's one (1) full week of work.

### 2.8.6 Provider Vacation Policy

Licensed child care providers may be eligible for reimbursement during a one week shut down once per calendar year. When a provider has notified the local administrative agency and the parents that his or her child care program will be closed, and the closure will be for **one week** or less, reimbursements will be made to the provider for enrollment-based authorizations, if approved by the local administrative agency. No payment will be made to the provider for attendance-based authorizations.

The closure of the child care program can be due to the provider being on vacation, a medical reason, preparation of the center for a season change, or any other reason.



If the child care provider will be closed for more than one week in a calendar year, all authorizations must be ended to ensure that payment will not be issued for any time beyond the first week that the program is closed. New authorizations may be allowed when the child care program reopens.

If payment was made for more than one week in a calendar year to a program that was closed, that payment is considered a child care provider overpayment and must be recovered.

If the child care provider charges for the time period when their child care program was closed and the subsidy reimbursement cannot be issued for any reason according to policy, the parent will be responsible for paying the child care provider.